

RENEWING LIVE GAS MAINS

Steve Vick International works with Wessex Resins to minimise the cost of gas main renewals and limit disruptions for customers

Steve Vick International Limited is a company which specialises in working on major infrastructure projects in the gas, water and nuclear industries. Steve Vick uses expandable foam products to seal mains and enable work on live gas mains. To ensure that projects run smoothly and safely, Steve Vick outsources manufacturing of all its foam products to trusted supplier, Wessex Resins.

Challenge

Many parts of the UK's network of cast iron gas mains date back to Victorian times. To improve the safety and reliability of gas supply for residents and businesses, the UK gas industry, the UK Government and the gas regulator Ofgem have embarked on an ambitious 30-year programme to replace ageing gas mains with modern polyethylene (PE) pipes.

To deliver this major phased network upgrade, several of the leading gas infrastructure companies are working with Steve Vick, a leading provider of engineering solutions to the gas, water and nuclear industries. Based on its patented 'Live Gas Mains Insertion' technique, Steve Vick is able to insert polyethylene (PE) pipes into old, low-pressure cast iron mains keeping the old main live throughout the process and minimising costs and disruption for customers.

To successfully deliver 'Live Gas Mains Insertion' and a range of innovative services, Steve Vick needs to be able to seal mains effectively and isolate different areas of the gas network. As part of its patented services, the company has developed highly specialised expandable foam products to seal old pipes and voids – temporarily or permanently as required.

The expandable foam products used by Steve Vick have to be highly consistent if projects are to run smoothly. Tony Day, Joint MD of Steve Vick, says, "If foam expands more quickly or more slowly than we expect, or the foam expands to a volume we don't expect, there can be major problems. Foam that expands too much could even pass the end of the pipe we're working on and seal off a major main, interrupting supply for thousands of people – and that must never happen."

**STEVE
VICK**
INTERNATIONAL



We know that the products we get from Wessex Resins will perform as we expect them to and that gives us tremendous peace of mind. In an industry where errors can be costly or even dangerous, we appreciate Wessex Resins' commitment to quality."

**Tony Day, Joint MD
of Steve Vick**

Solution

For many years, Steve Vick has worked with Wessex Resins to ensure that its expandable foam products, including FOAMPACK™, an annular sealant, and FULLSEAL™, a thixotropic, annular gas sealant, perform consistently.

"Wessex Resins understands that our FOAMPACK and FULLSEAL products are mission critical for our business," says Day. "Using formulations that have been approved for use in the UK gas network, Wessex Resins can ensure that these products perform exactly as we expect them to in the live environment, each and every time."

To ensure that the industry approved products are formulated in line with strict industry specifications, Wessex Resins conducts in-depth testing during and after the manufacturing process. Jackie Lane, Chief Chemist and Technical Director at Wessex Resins says, "We work to extremely strict specifications for all Steve Vick's foam products and that includes pre-defined cream times, gel times and foam volumes. These are among the most stringently tested products we manufacture for any of our customers."

As an additional safety net, Steve Vick tests every batch of expandable foam in-house to ensure compliance with the gas industry's strict manufacturing standards. "We always test products delivered to us by Wessex Resins, but we've never found any issues so far," says Day. "That's testament to the high quality and consistency of Wessex Resins' manufacturing processes."

Benefits

Compliance with strict gas industry standards

After years of delivering expandable foam products that meet the highest standards of quality and consistency, Wessex Resins has won Steve Vick's trust. "We know that the products we get from Wessex Resins will perform as we expect them to, and that gives us tremendous peace of mind," says Day. "In an industry where errors can be costly or even dangerous, we appreciate Wessex Resins' commitment to quality."

Continuity of supply

The trust Steve Vick places in Wessex Resins goes well beyond 'business-as-usual' processes. "When there was a shortage of a key ingredient for one of our products, Wessex Resins informed us immediately and worked with us to find possible replacements," says Day. "Wessex also keeps us informed of any changes to ingredients or suppliers, which helps us meet our regulatory requirements and protect our business."

To protect supply of expandable foam products for Steve Vick, Wessex Resins now holds a minimum six-month supply of all product ingredients. "The fact that Wessex Resins plans production of our products six months ahead shows their high level of commitment to our business," says Day.

Going the extra mile

Steve Vick also values the responsiveness of the Wessex Resins team in emergency situations. "Part of our remit is helping to manage gas leaks and other major emergencies," says Day. "On one occasion, we needed a huge volume of foam to fill a major gas main in West London and Wessex Resins was able to ramp up its production extremely quickly to meet our needs. There are also times when we require deliveries at extremely short notice, and Wessex always goes the extra mile for us."

A strategic, trusted supplier

The business relationship between Steve Vick and Wessex Resins is going from strength-to-strength, with expandable foam products now used for a wide variety of applications, in several industry sectors.

"We have successfully used foam manufactured by Wessex Resins for innovative projects in the nuclear industry, both at Sellafield and at the Harwell Nuclear Development and testing Labs in Oxfordshire, where our project to decommission tubes in the BEPO storage block won us the NDA's prestigious 'Best application of an innovative solution' award," says Day. "Wessex Resins is now a strategic supplier, as well as a trusted supplier, for our business."



Challenge

- Delivering gas mains renewals cost effectively and safely
- Minimising service disruptions for customers
- Sealing mains effectively so work can take place safely and on schedule
- Ensuring that all foam products used to seal mains perform consistently

Solution

- A range of expandable foam products manufactured for Steve Vick by Wessex Resins
- Strict compliance with industry approved formulations
- In-depth testing during and post manufacture

Benefits

- Consistent, high-quality manufacturing processes
- Peace of mind based on a trust-based supplier relationship
- Continuity of supply based on a minimum six-month stock of key ingredients
- Rapid responses in emergency situations
- Innovative application of foam products in different scenarios and sectors

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